643
651 Mossi circle into several administrative districts, still continue to
178 make substantial annual gifts to the Mogho Naba (cowries, cattle, and a considerable amount of grain, millet and rice).

634 Payments Due the Kombemba (canton chiefs). Formerly each
651 canton held one or more ritual feasts each year, and the Mossi subjects, that is, the tengsoba (village elders, notables, and those in comfortable circumstances), regularly made gifts to the canton chief (cowries, goats, sheep, and roosters). The Peulh [Peul] gave cattle.

The canton chiefs also retained a portion of the payment made by the people for the benefit of the Mogho Naba.

[178] At the present time these traditional gifts are still made, but white or light gray roosters are more and more being substituted for livestock. [71]

661 Payments due the Ministers of the Mogho Naba. In order to
431 maintain good relations with the ministers, court officials, and
644 intermediaries between the emperor and his vassals, the canton
634 chiefs in former times used to present unspecified gifts to the high dignitaries at court when they paid their respects to the Mogho Naba. A certain number of cowries was given to the pougtiéma, first wife of the Mogho Naba (500 cowries equals two and a half francs, formerly 50 centimes).

A canton chief who has been called to Ouagadougou for some reason may choose not to call on the emperor, but he is obligated to bring cowries, a sheep, or a rooster to the minister who is head of the province in which his canton is located.

651 Common laws. (a) Regulation of market fees. Before the ar-
443 rival of the French, market fees at Ouagadougou were collected for the benefit of the Mogho Naba by a collector in his employ.

In important villages, fees were collected by Gourounsi [Grunshi] captives on behalf of the canton chiefs (kombemba).

651 (b) Hunting. In former times, before the fields were cleared
224 for seeding, the Mossi used to go out in groups of several villages
634 on hunting drives. Small game (partridges, guinea fowl, hares, etc.) were left to the hunters. On the other hand, a haunch of any quadruped killed (deer, gazelle, coba [a kind of horse antelope], etc.) was reserved for the canton chief.

241 tuber, Coleus coffini, which Europeans call oussounifing or fabirama,
262 and which may replace potatoes in a pinch, are cultivated in the soils most propitious to them.

231 The precious karite /shea/ tree (Butyrospermum parkii) grows in
262 most fields; its fruit, prized for its cool and slightly sweet flesh, con-
137 tains a pit which yields karite butter, the fat most widely used in
[388] cooking and to make soap. Around the villages, and sometimes even within them, the néré /locust bean/ tree (Parkia africana) produces
[356] elongated pods; its bark, mashed in water, yields a paste that is used to harden the floors of the huts. Its flour makes a cooling drink when
[272] mixed in water, and it may also be eaten; its seeds /8/ are used to make kalro /kalre in the original/, the soumbara of the Bambara, an ingredient /made from locust beans, néré/ of all carefully prepared
137 sauces. The doubalé and silk-cotton or kapokiero trees spread their shade over the weavers, numerous among the Mossi, and over the talkers who are even more. Bamboo grows well in the damp southern regions, and the palm oil tree is occasionally found. The caoutchouc liana, however, has not yet been introduced.

231 Small chickens run in all directions through the villages, along with domesticated guinea hens. Everywhere in the bush near the huts,
[857] little boys herd goats and sheep; this is the task of youngsters here at the age when their contemporaries among us /in France/ begin to learn the alphabet. The most common sheep and goats are small in size. The sheep have short hair. Sometimes, especially in the larger
[439] villages where markets are held, goats and sheep are to be seen with long legs and long, curled horns. They are imported from the north-east and fattened to be sold as butcher's meat. The height of fashion for the wife or a prosperous naba is to be followed by a Touareg /Tuareg/ sheep, well washed and very white. It is fed on millet leftovers and bean mush, and its mistress often presents it with a bit of salt to lick. In short, it is well cared for and agreeably fat; on some important feast day, it will embellish the menu.

The huts are usually guarded by very commonplace dogs, often ill-tempered, but cowardly. A stick is enough to drive them away.
[224] They are mostly used in the hunt, the great Mossi pastime during the dry season. Domesticated ducks are sometimes found in nabas' households, as well as pigeons, but these birds are not widespread and not within the reach of everyone. Finally, almost every group of huts has cats which belong to the women and which are difficult

221 After a few hours when the millet has been sufficiently threshed,
241 the emptied and broken husks are swept to the side. The grain is
476 gathered in a heap, and a strong fellow tosses it into the air with a
788 wooden shovel to separate the chaff from the good grain, which is put in a heap. When all the grain has thus been winnowed, it is surrounded with a ring of ashes to protect it against evil spirits. Then one of the threshers, who is not a member of the family, puts some millet in a gourd and sprinkles it with water. He proceeds to throw it by the handful onto the millet pile, saying: "So-and-So fears rain," mentioning the name of the owner of the harvest and the name of every member of his family. He ends by saying: "When we are finished weeding, let the drought come. When we are finished planting, let the heavy rains come." If the owner of a horse is present, he receives a gourd of millet for his mount. Each of the elders also takes some for his chicken. If this ceremony is not carried out, the millet may not be used as seed the following year.

221 /49/ The women come with their baskets; a man takes one of the
251 brooms and sinks it into the millet heap in various places; then the
[482] men fill the baskets and help the women place them on their heads. At the house the millet is unloaded into granaries made of clay mixed with finely cut straw. These granaries have the shape of large jars 1.50 meters high; they usually rest on large stones, and they are
[343] smoked out beforehand to get rid of termites. They are closed with a lid of the same material and covered with a small thatch roof as a protection against rain, for they usually stand in the open air in the inner courtyard. Millet beer is brought and drunk on the spot while the millet is being winnowed. Sometimes the festivities end with dancing, and then everyone goes home, to begin again another day. The month of January goes by in this fashion.

221 February, March, and April are vacation months, months for hunting and fishing.

224 Actually no Mossi is a hunter, yet all Mossi are hunters to some
411 degree. Since the French occupation, men armed with very primitive flint guns are sometimes seen on the fringes of the heavy bush which borders the Volta and contains large game. These flint guns are so crude that they frequently burst and wound the man who recklessly
224 loaded it with too much powder. These natives know the bush thoroughly and are very helpful to the adventurers who wish to hunt koba, buffalo, elephant, leopard, or even lion, although the latter is to the

●224 Mossi as to us the king of beasts, the master of the bush (wé' naba), and they attack it only if it has killed a man.

These hunters make their own powder with ground charcoal and 224 saltpeter extracted from earth soaked with urine. This earth is washed 389 carefully, and a residue of saltpeter crystals is left when the liquid evaporates. Usually no sulphur is added because it is too costly. This powder burns well, and when made carefully it is quite effective. The hunters keep it in small gourds or ram horns; they only make a little at a time. Hard pebbles are used as bullets.

224 The natives know how to disguise themselves skillfully, and they only shoot at very close range when the animal is not moving. They often lie in wait for hours on end, sometimes for the whole night. They know the habits of the animals and the water holes where they come to drink, and they build small huts with branches or dig holes where they hid under foliage. Others more ingeniously build a vast funnel-shaped trap, its open base sometimes one or even two kilometers long; the sides of equal length consist of thorn fences, and the tip of the funnel, which is located near a thick tree, leaves barely enough space for the animal to pass through. The hunter takes his position up in the tree with bow and arrows and settles comfortably because he may have to wait a long time. Unsuspecting animals follow the thorn fence and come to the tree where they are killed. The hunters manage to fell some handsome game in this fashion, even elephants, in spite of their very primitive weapons.

/50/ Professional hunters, those who always have adventures to relate and who say like those of Tarascon that they never miss a shot, such true hunters are rare, but those who hunt as a pastime are as numerous as the Mossi themselves. A Mossi never goes out without [411 a stick. When asked why he does so, he answers that it is to kill 752] snakes, which — alas! — take so many victims, and to drive off dogs; and then, "I might find a hare or some other animal in the bush, and [231] what would I kill it with if I didn't have a stick?" Many of them have dogs which are truly not very ferocious, but they are poorly fed and preserve all their agility. A Mossi on his way to the fields or walking from one village to another always keeps his ears and eyes open; he is on the lookout for meat! Since he does not have many ideas, he is seldom absorbed in his thoughts or absent-minded.

The season we are now studying is the time of large-scale hunting. Several villages get together and set a date and a meeting place.

1 [i.e. February-April. - Analyst]

224 Each village goes there in a group, burning the bush and driving on the game. If the plan is carried out properly, the animals are eventually enclosed within a circle of fire behind which stand the natives, some on horseback and armed with spears, others on foot with their dogs and equipped merely with sticks or sometimes with bows and arrows. The bows are of medium size and made of hard wood. The 411 224 string is usually made from a rattan stem or a millet stalk. Arrows are made of the tough and light stems of tall reeds; they are not barbed, but the tip is made of iron and shaped like a harpoon, with two and sometimes three pairs of teeth. The leather quiver hangs from the shoulder.

224 The panic-stricken hares, deer, antelope of various kinds, guinea hens, and partridges run all around the fiery circle, and those who manage to cross this first obstacle are felled by the blows of the hunters. These hunts are sometimes quite fruitful, and buffalo and koba are 224 occasionally caught. Unfortunately, every animal killed in the bush 661 belongs by right to the naba, who searches the hunters' bags and takes what he pleases. If he learns that a lucky hunter has killed an antelope and failed to bring it, he summons him to his presence, reproves him harshly for his lack of consideration, and thrashes him soundly. It must nevertheless be said that such cases are constantly growing rarer, and now the natives flatly refuse to yield their catch.

224 Often no game is caught because one of the villages has failed to appear and the animals have fled through the unguarded opening. In short, these hunting parties are mostly a pastime and entertainment. The hunters who bring back a catch are few, owing to the large number of men who participate. It is true that when they set out for the hunt they all hope they will be lucky. They all are thirsty, for at this time of year the sun is very hot and it is better to hunt in the middle of the day when the game lies down in the bushes and cannot run very far. These hunting parties dwindle year by year. The cultivated fields are more extensive, and the game has withdrawn deeper into the bush. Also, the natives find it more difficult to reaching an agreement for large parties of beaters; /51/ they prefer to hunt in small groups, far from the chiefs' sight, so that nothing will be taken from them.

226 In addition to hunting, fishing is the great pastime at this time of year. Professional fishermen are as rare as professional hunters. Of [481] course, those who live on the banks of streams usually know how to swim, especially when they live near those watercourses which are most difficult to ford.

[Yes, February - April. - Analyst]

spilled salt, /99/ four-leaf clovers, hares crossing the roadway, etc., been altogether eradicated by science?

No matter how things may stand among us, superstition reigns supreme among the Mossi. Amulets and talismans are greatly valued. Anything may contribute to their manufacture, from the highly prized head of a crowned crane to that of a hawk or a gray heron. Anything may be found in the numerous little bags which hang down a native's neck, from scraps of paper with a few words of Arabic scribbled upon them which Moslem Marabouts distribute in large numbers throughout the Sudan, to cowries or the ashes of every possible and imaginable root. There are amulet bracelets which are worn on the left arm and which protect against seuya sorcerers (see p. 127) if their wearer remembers to push them swiftly up his arm when meeting one of those dreadful soul-eaters. There are bracelets which protect people in fights, and iron rings which act as safeguards against snake bite. Do you want to be welcomed and accepted by the man whose daughter you wish to marry? Wear a certain bracelet on your right arm, and your hopes will come true.

Amulets are worn around the head, neck, arm, or wrist. They are sewn to the cap or to the clothes, attached to the belt, to the pipe, to the staff, anywhere. The list would be endless if we tried to enumerate all the various kinds of amulets. The shoulder blade of a beef fastened to the end of a stick and an iron chain stretched across the soukala entrance protect its inhabitants against a host of misfortunes and unpleasant nocturnal visitations. People consider themselves fortunate to possess such easy protection against the numerous spirits prowling for victims.

If you have dogs, watch them carefully. If they are so careless as to lie down or relieve themselves in a basket, or to vomit within the hut, kill them fast or you will die yourself. If your bitch bears only one puppy, kill her pitilessly. When the gray heron flies over the huts shrieking, mothers beat on their jars for fear that their children will get diarrhea. Hunters must not eat koba meat before they engage in their sport, and if they want to gain skill, they must secure certain roots, cook them in water, and wash their hands with the mixture.

Sunday is the day of the spirits, the day when koure is held. It is also a good day to build huts. There is nothing special about Monday, but you must be careful about Tuesday, for you never know what it

231 64 inhabitants among the nakomsé (nobles, descendants of chiefs, true Mossi). The Dagari and Nounouma, on the other hand, have one horse per 1,000 inhabitants, the Sissala one per 400, the Kassonboura one per 300. The Yarsé, who are in better circumstances than the common Mossi but less fond of horses than the nakomsé, have one horse per 100 people. Finally, the Foulbé of Mossi territory, who raise horses, have one for every 26 people.

To summarize, Mossi stockbreeding is mediocre except for donkeys and horses. Let us proceed to the hunt.

224 First of all, like the Gourounsi and all other populations of West Africa, the Mossi hunt collectively during the dry, warm season.

/494/ This collective endeavor is their chief hunting method.

Aside from this, the cultivators hunt individually with bow and arrow, chiefly during the dry season although sometimes also during the damp season.

Finally, there are a few elephant hunters in the southern regions. They are to be found only in the south, for in Mossi territory proper the relative density of the population and resulting extent of cultivated land make for a nearly total absence of elephants. Gourounsi and Boussansé lands, on the other hand, which are much less densely populated, include some deserted areas where elephants may be found. Mossi hunters, therefore, have settled in the southern part of the territory, on the borders of Gourounsi and Boussansé lands, to scour both regions /for elephants/.

At Kombisiguiri, for example, there are ten of them, ten soukala heads. They kill one or two elephants a year on the average. They sell the meat to the village that stands nearest to the spot where the animal was killed. This nets them about 50,000 cowries. [435] As for the tusks, they sell them for 120,000 or 140,000 cowries, sometimes 200,000. They always give a piece of the meat to the chief of the canton where the animal was killed. They hunt with [411] guns, while in the old days they hunted with poisoned spears but on the same individual basis as they do now.

[463] Elephant hunters do not cultivate the soil during the winter season, but their wives and children do.

224 435 At Kombisiguiri, as we have just seen, there are 10 elephant hunters out of about 70 chiefs of compounds. Among the latter there are also some 20 men who hunt other animals, but they are cultivators who hunt on the side. They seek buffalo. When they kill one, they sell the meat to the village that stands nearest to the spot of the kill for 35,000 cowries. They also hunt the koba antelope, whose meat is worth from 20,000 cowries, the striped deer worth 6,500, the pig deer worth 5,000, the wart hog worth 10,000. They also hunt hares, bustards, guinea fowl, partridges, turtle-doves, etc.

224 262 The Mossi do not hunt monkeys and do not eat them. /495/ Actually, there are very few in Mossi territory, except for the red-haired monkeys who are great lovers of millet and maize.

224 825 778 The Mossi do not hunt crocodiles because the latter are held sacred. If one were to kill a crocodile, one would become ill, one's head would swell and one's teeth would fall out. Snakes, on the other hand, are killed and eaten, but in Mossi territory proper there are few large ones (pythons, boas) because the climate is not sufficiently humid. They are more numerous in Boussansé and Gourounsi lands.

226 Fishing is less important than hunting among the Mossi, for the simple reason that the land, with its low rainfall, only has muddy ponds during the dry season (on this subject, see our Introduction /not translated/). Thus, not only do the Mossi lack professional fishermen, but the villages do not even undertake collective fishing during the dry season (with the exception of some southern localities, in Kombisiguiri for example). Only children attempt to catch the mudfish which are always present in large quantities in small ponds, even when they are nearly dry.

222 Gathering, on the other hand, plays the same role among the Mossi as among the other Sudanese Blacks, and we shall study it here in some detail, since we have only described it in broad outline so far.

222 137 The tree most widespread throughout Mossi territory, and which grows wild, is the karité. Its leaves are a pleasant green, and it is somewhat similar to our Normandy apple tree. Its bark is whitish and made of small juxtaposed quadrilaterals. It is the karité which

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

The district chiefs did not often exercise their rights over fruit trees in the weogho, as the wasteland in their districts was called. If a villager went into the weogho and collected fruit or wood from the chief's trees, he surrendered only part of it to the chief. On the other hand, if he received permission from a district chief to farm in the weogho, he was obliged to gather and send to the chief the fruit on any valuable trees. A district chief sometimes granted the rights over certain fruit trees in the inhabited areas to specific families or individuals, for personal reasons or as a reward for services. In such cases, the chief forfeited his rights to these trees, but retained his rights to the others.[28]

District chiefs also controlled all the resources of creeks and pools within their jurisdiction that were not sacred to certain aboriginal families, or which had not been transferred to specific persons. The aboriginal Ninisi families always notified the district chief when they planned to perform their annual fishing rite to the earth deities. He, in turn, sent representatives to the ceremony, and they were given part of the catch as his share. Persons who were granted permission to fish in the chief's water holes gave him a substantial part of their catch, and even those persons who had private control of fishing places regularly did the same.

The district chiefs also had rights to certain parts of animals caught in their territories. This applied especially to animals caught with such traditional weapons as traps, clubs, bows and arrows, and spears. Men who had obtained flint guns and other firearms from the Ashanti or elsewhere and who had bought their own powder were not obliged to give the chief a part of their game, but it was always prudent to do so. According to a long-standing tradition, the tusk and legs of a slain elephant that were not resting on the ground belonged to the chief, and those that lay on the ground belonged to the Tengsoba in whose ritual jurisdiction the animal had been slain. But the district chief's secular power was so much stronger than the Tengsoba's sacred power that he usually took both tusks, leaving the Tengsoba only two legs. The district chief also received other portions of elephants and parts of all the larger animals killed in his territory. And when hunters in the district were successful in the chase, they usually gave him entire small animals.

Every village in a district contributed to the district chief's revenue by performing special services for him. Certain villages were responsible for keeping specific huts in his compound in good condition; others, whose lands bordered on the woods, had to provide firewood for his compound; and yet others furnished grass and other fodder for his horses. Many villages had the task of cultivating special fields and crops for the district chief.

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
FA28 Mossi FA28

Red and White Voltas are merely a series of small stagnant pools during the dry season. In some low-lying areas around the main water courses, trapped water provides the moisture for dank riverine vegetation.

The soils of Mossi country are mainly ferruginous with red argils and pure silicates of aluminum predominating in the northern region. The soils in the south are thin, sandy, and formed from the decomposition of crystalline rocks and sandstones. During the dry season the Mossi landscape appears too sterile to produce plant life, but with the first drops of rain the entire country soon becomes covered with the grasses and shrubs which are characteristic of this Sudanese region. The uncultivated but valuable trees of this area include the Baobab *(Adansonia digitata)*, the locust bean *(Parkia biglobosa)*, the shea-butter *(Butyrospermum parkii)*, the tamarind *(Tamarindus indica)* and the kapok *(Bombax costatum)*. The plants which the Mossi cultivate include varieties of cereals, roots and legumes. Sorghums *(Sorghum vulgare)* and millets *(Pennisetum typhoides)* are their staples, with maize *(Zea mays)* filling the role of a secondary but rather useful crop because its growing cycle is shorter than that of other important crops and it breaks the "hungry period." Maize would be a more important crop to the Mossi if it could grow on soil less fertile than what is normally available around the Mossi compound—the area where it brings the greatest yield. Peanuts, onions, rice, beans, okra, peas and sweet potatoes are other food crops. Tobacco is grown for local consumption, but the crops which have the greatest export value are cotton and indigo, used for making cloth and dyeing it.

The wild fauna of the country does not provide a major part of the food needs of the Mossi people. The several species of deer and antelope, monkeys, rabbits and wild pig are hunted and used for food. But the elephants and lions which are also found in the country are sources of great distress to the people because the former decimate the growing crops and the latter attack and kill the grazing animals.

The Mossi rear two main types of cattle: a zebu-like one in the northern regions and a small dwarf variety in the south. These animals are kept primarily for their milk and for export, and are seldom killed for meat until they are very old. The animals which provide the Mossi with meat are goats, sheep, chickens and guinea fowls. Pig-raising is not widespread and seems to be declining in importance with the increasing observance of Islamic food taboos, even among people who are still pagan. Fish forms only a minor part of the Mossi diet and is obtained mainly from traders rather than from local activities. The Mossi also rear donkeys and horses for which they have